

Since 'Time' magazine rated him as "The master of comic insincerity" the semi-lovable hipster of deadpan humour has built up an indestructable reputation as one of Hollywood's biggest comic actors. Following the phenomenal success of *Ghostbusters* in 1984 BILL MURRAY was voted the most popular star in America after Clint Eastwood and given the esteemed title of "The most irreverent humourist since W C Fields". EDWARD MURPHY reports on the man behind the image.

● "PEOPLE expect so much from comedians," says Bill Murray, who stars in and co-directs the new comedy-thriller *Quick Change*, "They demand something that you can always give them . . . and that's a performance. I've always felt quite nervous by the fact that most people can't understand that I'm playing a character."

Murray doesn't care whether or not his name appears on a film's publicity (it didn't in the case of *Tootsie* where he appeared uncredited as Dustin Hoffman's room-mate); he doesn't care if he's not the star of the movie (after *Ghostbusters* he took supporting roles in *Nothing Lasts Forever* and *The Little Shop Of Horrors*) and he doesn't care if he gets egg on his face.

Subsequent to filming his new movie he spent three years as an American in Paris. For him, the Parisian backdrop seems hardly inspiring for the native Chicagoan, but it provided the tranquility and anonymity which Murray always yearns for.

"I appreciate being a celebrity and all the trappings that it unfortunately brings with it," Murray explains, "I've occasionally come across some wonderful fans. There are people who will accept your privacy and give you a certain amount of room to breathe. But unfortunately, there are quite a few jerks as well. I don't have to tell you that the jerks make life tough."

Murray rose to fame – along with Chevy Chase, Dan Aykroyd and John Belushi – on the popular US satire, *Saturday Night Live*. "SNL was great," Murray says, "There was a certain amount of freedom in it. I could go to corner stores without being mobbed. After *Stripes* I lost that luxury, although I still felt comfortable with the position I held. I was surprised that the movie was a big success in the States and that I still had that kind of freedom."

"After *Ghostbusters* I felt radioactive.

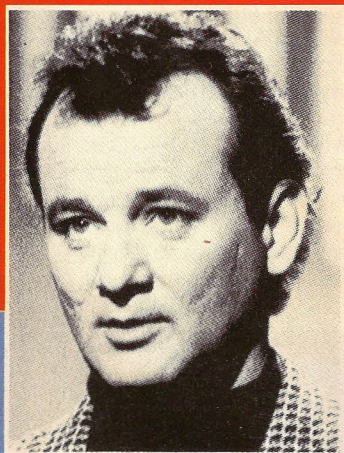
The movie was *too* successful for me. When you have something that big, people shout at you as you walk down the street. They shout 'There he is!' It's a very disturbing experience. I don't want to be as recognisable as Frank Sinatra. I want to be able to walk down the street. I think that you really do have

to back away from *too* much success."

But few Hollywood stars would even dare make the uncalculated career moves which Bill Murray makes.

For example, the filming of *The Razor's Edge*, W Somerset Maughan's intensely serious outlook of World War One, was a long-held dream, and Murray used

"After *Ghostbusters* I felt radioactive. The movie was too successful for me. I think that you really do have to back away from too much success," says Murray seen here with the gang in the *Ghostbusters* sequel



BILL MURRAY ~ MOVIE

his participation in *G* force Columbia Pictures to finance As the spiritually tormented Larry D. nell, Murray turned in a very off-be serious acting performance – although subsequent derision from the critics urged entire continents to avoid the movie.

After failure to turn straight star, he took Brecht's little "Man's A Man" by the horns and performed it on stage – in a former cow barn in New York.

"It was the opportunity to make a fool of myself in a low pressure situation," he revealed. "Making a fool of myself on TV and on movies was too stressed. I needed something smaller."

With the financial success of *Scrooged* and *Ghostbusters II*, he's willing to take an artistic gamble as star and co-director of *Quick Change*. Here, Murray plays a hot-shot thief who robs a New York bank, but discovers getting to the airport with the loot is the most arduous crisis of the plan. Based on Jay Cronley's novel, it had been made into a film in France with Jean-Paul Belmondo in the lead.

"I never really liked Belmondo's version," Murray admits, "I think that was the main challenge for remaking the movie. I mean, if you're going to rework an idea, it's better to grab one which hasn't been worked to its full potential before. Howard (Franklin, his co-director) felt the same way when I showed him the movie, and that made me feel good because we were working together."

"I wanted to do something which will be considered – smallish. I'm not afraid of taking big steps, but it's got to be over a short distance. There's no short distances over huge, multi-million dollar blockbusters because before you know it, you've got to deal with stars' salaries, the constant rewrites, the marketing people, the ad people. Jeez, that's all heart-attack material for directors and producers."

The comic actor has shown an interest in putting his hand into further aspects of film making – including producing. One future project reportedly involves Glasgow film-maker Bill Forsyth, whom Murray has a great respect for.

"I love Forsyth's sense of humour," he admits, "A friend of mine has a great treatment for a film and Bill really likes it. Hopefully it won't be long before we get together." ●

Clowning around for his latest movie, *Quick Change* in which he plays a bank robber



THE CLOWN